1948

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

Medical Officer of Health

for the

URBAN DISTRICT

(Municipal Borough)

OF ROMSEY

The Romsey Press, Limited

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Urban District (Municipal Borough) of Romsey

To the Mayor and Corporation of the Borough of Romsey.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit the Annual Report for 1948.

SECTION A. Statistics and Social Conditions of the Area.

Area (in acres)...	1212
Population (as estimated by the Registrar General) ...	6250
Rateable Value	£35,710
Sum represented by a 1d. rate	£156

A Brewery, a Horticultural Nursery, Paper Mills, Timber and Lumber Mills and a Jam Factory, give employment to a proportion of the population. The rest of the inhabitants are mostly engaged in retail trade or other occupations common to a Market Town.

VITAL STATISTICS.

	Male	*Female*	*Total*	
Live Births				
Legitimate	62	50	112	Birth rate per 1,000
Illegitimate	3	4	7	estimated population 19.3.
Still Births	3	2	5	Rate (per 1.000 live and still births) — 41.
Deaths	41	37	78	Death rate per 1,000 estimated population 13.1
Number of women dying in consequence of child birth.				From Sepsis ... 0 From other causes ... 0

INFANTILE MORTALITY. Death rate of Infants under 1 year of age.

All infants per 1,000 live births	52
Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate births	55
Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate births	0
Deaths from Cancer all ages	12
Deaths from Measles all ages	0
Deaths from Whooping Gough all ages	0
Deaths from Diarrhoea under 2	1

Of all causes of death, Heart Disease accounted for 20, Cerebral Heamorrhage 13. Cancer 12, Pneumonia 3, and Tuberculosis 3. There is a slight increase in deaths from Cancer, and Pneumonia, but deaths from other diseases are above average.

Owing to the small population, it is difficult to draw any definite conclusion from variations in the statistics from year to year.

The general nutrition of the school children is at a slightly lower level than pre-war, but one does not find the ill fed children from a few families as in pre-war years. The school meals and milk have corrected this.

Romsey from a health point of view has all the advantages of Town and Country, and the expection of life is good.

Housing has much improved. The high rents for new Council Houses are a handicap, but people who have difficulty in paying them would be unwilling to let others go in and move into the cheaper non Council Houses left vacant. The impression gained from remarks made, is that they are hoping for a reduction later by being subsidised from the rates. It would probably be an advantage if any tenants in the old lower rented Council Houses, who are better able to afford the new rents, were given the opportunity of moving into the new ones, but these tenants, although wanting similar amenities, as in the new ones, are not anxious to pay increased rents.

SECTION B. General Provision of Health Services.

1. Public Health Officers of the authority.
   (a) The Medical Officer of Health is also Assistant Medical Officer County Council and Medical Officer of Health for the adjoining Rural District of Romsey and Stockbridge.
   (b) The Chief Sanitary Inspector is also Borough Engineer and Surveyor
   (c) Assistant Sanitary Inspector.
   (d) A Veterinary Surgeon for the inspection of Dairies, Meat and other foods.

2. **Nursing in the Home.**

(a) General and Midwifery by District Nurses.

(b) In cases of ophthalmia not requiring hospital treatment, nursing is provided where necessary by the County Council.

3. Laboratory facilities.

(a) County Laboratory, The Castle, Winchester

(b) Emergency Public Health Laboratory, Royal Hampshire County Hospital, Winchester

4. Hospitals

General—The Romsey and District Hospital, The Southampton Hospital and Broadlands Annexe are those principally used.

Infections—Where cases cannot be satisfactorily nursed at home, they are admitted by arrangement to the Salisbury and District Isolation Hospital.

5. Welfare

There is a Welfare Clinic and Centre at Romsey.

6. Orthopaedic

The County Council have arranged for children in this Area to attend the Clinics at Eastleigh and Totton. There is a Remedical Exercises Clinic in Romsey.

SECTION C. Sanitary Circumstances of the Area

Report of the Borough Surveyor, Engineer and Chief Sanitary Inspector

1. **Water.**

The area is supplied with a piped supply by the Southampton Corporation from their Waterworks Pumping Station at Timsbury. The quality of the water is good and the supply "constant." A few houses in isolated areas still obtain their supply from shallow wells which are liable to contamination, and inadequate. The number of these houses have been reduced as opportunity offers.

2. **Drainage and Sewerage.**

The development of the housing estate on the perimeter of the Town has greatly assisted in the sewering of the adjoining unsewered highly urbanised areas, especially the area of Whitenap, whereby the town sewers have now been made available. Due to the lack of attention, inadequate working staff and proper maintenance during the war years, and also additional loading, the Disposal Works is now in urgent need of complete overhaul and partial extention. Breakdown occurs at the Pumping Station, the turbines are worked by water power, and the Mill Owners having a prior and more privileged right the water, at time of drought and on other occasions take most of the energy. This problem is under consideration, and will be considered in the scheme for works of improvement to the Sewage Works.

During the year under reveiw 60,177,850 gallons of sewege were pumped to the Sewage Works at Greenhill to receive treatment. The increase over the average expected was due to the rainfall and subsequent infiltration into the sewers. The quantity dealt with its equivalent to an average twenty-four hour flow of 164,171 gallons which is the discharge expected from a population of 8,243 persons at an allowance of 20 gallons per head per day. During the six winter months 25,115,650 gallons were pumped, equal to an average 24 hour flow of 135,760 gallons—a discharge expected from a population of 6,788 persons and during the six summer months 35,062,200 gallons were pumped eqaal to an average 24 hour flow of 191,597 gallons—the discharge expected from a population of 9,579 persons, allowing in both instances 20 gallons per head per day.

The amount of rainfall during the year registered at the Disposal Works was 29·89 inches, 15·00 of which fell in the winter months and 14·89 in the summer months.

3. Rivers and Streams.

There has been little pollution of the streams passing through the area apart from an occasional unauthorised disposal of garden refuse and waste vegetable matter. This has been properly dealt with by letters to persons who may most likely have been the cause. In general the circumstances have been satisfactory.

4. Close Accommodation.

The District except in a few isolated cases, is on water carriage system.

5. Public Cleansing.

The service is covered by District Labour over the whole of district and mechanical transport is used. All premises are visited once per week, and in certain cases where the waste is duly heavy and highly putrescent, collections are made more frequently during the week. The arrangements are satisfactory and the work well organised. All the highways receive weekly cleansing, the main roads being cleansed by arrangements with the County Council, who contribute towards the cost, 104 loads of street sweepings with an estimated weight of 210 tons were collected during the year. The refuse collected is taken to the Controlled Tip at Timsbury, and after sorting is tipped into excavated disused gravel pits. Constant precautions are taken against vermin and rat infestation.

6. Sanitary Inspection in the Area.

Inspection of the District has been carried out as often as possible. General sanitary circumstances of the shops and compliance with the Shop Act. 1934, are complied with, and no action has been necessary with any shop during the course of the year.

The total number of Sanitary Inspection amounted to 374 and 143 nuisances were discovered and subsequently abated.

During the year 5 fumigations were carried out after cases of infectious Disease.

7. Camping Sites.

1. No sites were used for camping purposes during the year.
2. No licences under Section 269, of the Public Health Act 1936, were issued by the Local Authority during the year.
3. Estimated number of campers resident in the area at any one time —None.

8. Smoke Abatement.

No complaints were received during the year. The Borough has few factories.

9. Swimming Baths and Pools.

Bathing for members of the male sex has, for a great number of years by use and custom taken place in a portion of the Fishlake Stream towards the upper reaches of the Town, The river is continually flowing—the source of of supply being the River Test.

The Corporation possess a modern open air Swimming Pool, equipped with modern purfication plant. This plant has been brought up to a state of perfection after the War years. The Pool is well managed and patronised, Samples of Pool water are taken at frequent intervals for bacteriological and other examinations. Records are kept and no adverse reports have been received.

10. Eradication of Bed Bugs.

Number of Council Houses found to be infested	...	... Nil
Other Houses do	...	... Three
Number of fumigations carried out during the year	...	... Three
Number of fumigations carried out during the year	...	... Three

11. Schools.

Inspection was made from time to time on the sanitary circumstances and conditions in the schools within the Borough. The Buildings for the most part are old, out dated and over crowded.

The Sanitary Accomodation and drainage is connected with the Council Sewers and is on the water carriage system.

SECTION D. Housing.

1. New Buildings and Housing.

Thirty building plans were submitted for approval during the year, 10 of which were for the erection of a total of 15 houses, one for adaption into flats and four for improvements, by additions of bathrooms to houses.

The Corporation's housing scheme at Botley Road was commenced for the erection of two contracts of 36 and 44 houses, (total 80 Reemas non-traditional) good progress was made towards the completion of the first contract, and of the works of roads and sewers to the estates. The 28 houses built under the local builders' scheme, whereby all local builders constructed one block of 4 houses each were successfully completed at Alma Road and the 6 Aged Persons Bungalows, completed by the Corporation by Direct Labour, were completed well below the contract figure, after allowing for all abnormals and increased costs of wages and materials (appendix to Circular 36/47 refers.)

The standard of fitness for more than 50% of the property suitable for housing working classes in the Borough, is well below the standard recommended by the Ministry of Health, and more than 20% are in such a state of dilapidation as to be incapable of repair at reasonable expense. In addition more than 300 applications for Council Houses have been received from families living in overcrowded conditions and a continuous new housing programme is therefore justified.

2. Administration.

Administration of the department was hampered considerably for an interval of over six months by the replacement of staff, in the appointment of an Assistant Sanitary Inspector, to replace one who had left the service. This delay was caused by the Ministry of Health in the investigation of details and confirming the appointment, after the rejection of the Council's first choice of a highly suitable candidate, by reason of the candidate's age and salary grading.

The technical work of the Department is such that it involves a considerable amount of overtime and homework, outside normal office hours, in addition to many hours spent at evening committees, and a great effort has to be made to keep it up-to-date.

The amount of routine work involved is also increased by reason of the number of Government Departments requiring returns, and the requirements of the District Auditor involving keeping of additional records and details, and certifications, all of which take up considerable working time, and which duties devolve on one person, and are extremely onerous.

There is also a lack of proper office facilities, by reason of the bad arrangement of the building, lighting and the cramped quarters occupied, which state of affairs is common to all departments.

In the case of casual labour, we have been more fortunate, notwithstanding the scarcity af labour and inducements offered in other fields. We have been able to carry out many works of labour and maintenance and other services with a well selected and trained outside staff, which works include the maintenance and erection of dwelling houses and the maintenance of the Council's properties, buildings, parks etc., with promptness and of a high standard, not normally experienced when dealing with contractors, and the awaiting and clearance of tenders and other contract formalities,

SECTION E. Inspection of Foods and Production.

The Veterinary Surgeon's Report, 1948.

1. Milk Supply.

Inspection of Cowkeepers in the Borough with regard to drainage, lighting, ventilation and water supply, involving 17 cowsheds, maintaining about 180 cows, were examined during the year. In two cases the drainage and flooring were deficient and orders given for their improvement.

The dairies and bottling appliances were examined and found satisfactory.

2. Meat and other Food Stuffs.

No slaughtering of cattle or sheep now takes place in the Borough, but certain meat and Corned meat were examined in the shops and condemned where unfit for human consumption.

All Shops, refrigerators, etc. were examined.

Certain fish, unfit for food was condemned and destroyed.

SECTION F. Prevalence of, and Control over Infectious and other diseases.

Where cases cannot be satisfactorily nursed at home, they are admitted to the Isolation Hospital.

The incidence of infectious disease was very low. There were no cases of Diphtheria and 1 case of Scarlet Fever.

Diphtheria Immunisation.

Children of school age are immunised at school. The under school age are partly done by local practitioners, at their surgeries and at the Welfare Centre. Diphtheria Immunisation has been carried out since 1935 and a large proportion of the young population have been immunised.

At the end of 1948 the number of children between 1 and 15 who have been immunised at any time is as follows :—

1 year 82. 2 years 68. 3 years 73. 4 years 78. 5—9 years 361. 10—14 years 456.

Notifiable Diseases (other than Tuberculosis) during the year 1948.

Disease	*Total number Notified*	*Adults admitted to Hospital*	*Total Deaths*
Scarlet Fever	1	1	0
Pneumonia	1	0	0
Erysipelas	1	0	0

CANCER.

Deaths—Males 8. Females 4.

TUBERCULOSIS

New cases notified—

Pulmonary—Males 2, Females 3. Non-Pulmonary—Males 2, Females 2.

Deaths—Males 2, Females 1.

The number of notified cases is above the average.

Causes of Death in Romsey Urban District, 1948.

Cause of Death	*Males*	*Females*
ALL CAUSES	41	37
Tuberculosis	2	1
Cancer	8	4
Intra Cranial	5	8
Heart	6	14
Other circulatory	2	2
Bronchitis	3	0
Pneumonia	2	1
Other Respiratory	1	0
Ulcers Stomach	1	0
Diarrhoea, under 2	1	0
Appendicitis	1	0
Nephritis	2	0
Premature Birth	2	0
Congenital injuries, etc.	1	0
Suicide	1	0
Road Traffic	0	0
Other Violent	1	1
All others	2	6

Yours faithfully,

G. TATE,

Medical Officer of Health.

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